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TORQUATO TASSO.



TASSO'S OAK, NEAR ROME.

THE foregoing engraving represents the oak, which is popularly termed Tasso's OAK, at Rome, from the circumstance, perhaps, that the poet, in the days of his poetry, haunted its shade, or the spot on which it was planted. This is all that we can say of this celebrated tree; it not being, of course, otherwise remarkable as an individual of its species: but a view of the tree, which has been associated with the name of the great Italian poet, furnishes us with a seasonable opportunity of laying before our readers a memoir of the celebrated Tasso.

Torquato Tasso was born in the year 1544, at Sorrento, a small sea-port town on the bay of Naples. His genius was great; and genius being not unoften allied to misfortune, a large share of this earthly drug was mixed up in the cup which the poet drank of.

VOL. XV.

But it is oftentimes the lot of humanity to create, or at least not to use sufficient energy to repress, the evils from which we suffer. His talents in early youth were marked for precocity, and he was designed by his father for the legal profession; so that, with a view to this, his apparent destiny, he pursued his studies at Padua, the Italian seminary of law. But, as was the case both with Ovid, sixteen centuries before, with Petrarch, and others on whom the Muses have smiled, verses would pour forth over the pages of Justinian. Ovid had already confessed—

*Et quod tentabam scribere, versus erat *:*

Tasso made the same confession, when, at the age of seventeen years, he published an epic poem, *Rinaldo*, in twelve cantos, dedicated to the Cardinal Ludovico

* Whatever I tried to write, was verse.

d'Este. Upon this his father released him from further pursuing his legal studies.

The chief work by which Tasso's name is now known is the *Jerusalem Delivered*, under the conduct of Godfrey of Bouillon, at the time of the Crusades. He began this in his nineteenth, and continued the work till the twenty-first year of his age, up to which time he seems to have gone on improving in mind and fortune. In the year 1565, by the wish of his patron, the cardinal, he attended the marriage of the Duke Alphonso, at Ferrara, with the Archduchess of Austria. He here saw the sisters of the duke, Lucretia and Leonora, who honoured him with their friendship and esteem. He was by them introduced to the notice of the duke, whose favour and patronage he enjoyed for some time, on the ground of his past poetical merits, and of those which his genius seemed likely to develope.

We have remarked that genius and misfortune are often yokefellows. We may still further observe that, from the flights of fancy the poet often descends into the depths of gloom: so true it is that all excitements are followed up by corresponding depressions; as if Nature had intended to establish throughout her works a system of compensation, or eventual equilibrium.

Ovid and Petrarch, the great predecessors of Tasso, seem to have fallen into a similar, but more reprehensible error than Tasso. The latter became enamoured of the duke's sister Leonora, who, it is believed, showed him such tokens of her attachment and regard, as to detain him almost entirely at Ferrara. He seems to have resided there till the publication of his *Jerusalem*, in 1575; having likewise put forth other excellent and beautiful pieces.

Without entering fully into a narration of all the movements and vicissitudes, of which he was the subject for nearly twenty years, we may briefly point attention to the sad and shocking consideration of his reputed insanity, for which he was confined for several years in a lunatic asylum. The consideration which calls our melancholy attention to this circumstance is, that the Princess Leonora has been deemed to be the secret cause of the temporary distraction to which his intellects were liable. By dwelling too long—too ardently, and too earnestly, upon this one idea of feminine worth and excellence—so far removed by fortune as to be for ever beyond his reach—he seemed to have departed from the order and habits of his fellow-creatures, and to have regarded everything through the maze of haste, irritation, and mental gloom.

The Duke Alphonso, who in the earlier part of his life had been Tasso's most partial friend and admirer, and who had even sought for immortality by identifying himself with the composition of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, was the source of Tasso's sad detention in an abode of wretchedness for seven years. How far the conduct of the duke towards Tasso affords matter for regret or censure, biographers do not seem very clear in deciding. Nor is this a thing very easy to be done, when the different passions and interests of human nature have to be weighed in the balance, and allowed for. Family pride, on the one hand, and though admiring the poet, yet condemning the mean condition of the scholar: on the other hand, a melancholy obstinacy, which knew not reason, and was at length partially, or at seasons, disowned by reason. Hence the necessity for coercing him, who was not at all times in the power of himself.

Many of his compositions, both in verse and prose, were sent out into the world during the sad years of his confinement; which consideration helps to show

us not a little that, if he were subject to any mental disease, it must have referred to one object, as it hindered him not from pursuing, but served perhaps rather for a theme, or foundation, for the established business of his life,—poetry.

In the year 1586 he was released from confinement, and having wandered about for several years, experiencing different turns of fortune, he at length came to Rome, in the year 1594, in the month of November. He had been latterly staying some time at Naples. When he had arrived at Rome, it was decided by the Pope and his council that Tasso should be solemnly crowned with laurel in the Capitol, as had formerly been done to Petrarch; which was an august ceremony, discharged only in favour of the greatest poet of the age.

We are told that Tasso was not desirous of this honour, and that he had within himself a presentiment that it would never take place. Such is the morbid, but oftentimes not unfaithful affection of the mind, which, from whatever cause, has been sunk into the gloomy depths of despair, from want of some early wish or hope being gratified. Upon setting out for Rome, he parted with his friend Manso, and took his leave of him as with one whom he should never see again.

When Tasso arrived at Rome, he was met by many prelates, and other persons of distinction, and was afterwards introduced by the two cardinals, Cynthio and Pietro, to the presence of the Pope, who was pleased to tell him "that his merit would add as much honour to the laurel he was going to receive, as that crown had added to the honour of those on whom it had formerly been conferred." Nothing was then thought of but the approaching solemnity: orders were given to decorate not only the Pope's palace, but the Capitol, and all the principal streets through which the procession would pass. Tasso, however, appeared not to heed all these magnificent preparations; and he is even said to have uttered, in reference to them a line from Seneca, to the purport that "approaching death cuts short all praises." His melancholy forebodings were realized. While they waited for fair weather, to celebrate the ceremony, he was seized with his last illness; and although he had not completed his fifty-first year, his studies and his misfortunes had brought him to a premature old age.

Being persuaded that his end was approaching, he desired to spend a few days in the monastery of St. Onuphrius, where his father, twenty years before, had breathed his last. He was received and treated with the utmost tenderness, by the prior and brethren of that society. The physicians in Rome tried all their art, but Tasso nevertheless grew worse; and when Rinaldini, his intimate friend, and the Pope's physician, told him his last hour was at hand, he thanked him for the news, and "acknowledged the goodness of God, who was pleased at last to bring him into port, after so long a storm." From that time he disengaged his thoughts from earthly things, received the sacrament in the chapel of the society, whither he was carried by the brethren, and then brought back to his chamber. He desired to be interred in the church of St. Onuphrius. To the request that he would leave a memorial of his will in writing, and dictate the epitaph to be engraven on his tomb, he smiled and said, "In regard to the first, I have little worldly goods to leave, and as to the second, a plain stone will suffice over me." He left Cardinal Cynthio his heir, and desired his picture to be given to his friend Manso. He then received the Pope's benediction from the hand of Cynthio, an honour never so conferred but on cardinals and men of distinction. He re-

ceived it with great humility, and said, "This is the crown I came to Rome to receive." On the cardinal's desiring to know if he had any request to make, Tasso said, "He had but one favour to desire of him, which was that he would collect and commit his works to the flames," (particularly his *Jerusalem Delivered*, the most perfect.) Strange wish! but happily disregarded. In the middle of the next day, finding himself growing faint, he embraced the crucifix, held to him by his confessor, and expired before he could utter the whole of the sentence, "In manus tuas, Domine!" (Into thy hands, O Lord!) He was buried the same evening where he desired, and a plain stone was placed over his remains. When Manso came afterwards to Rome, to visit the grave of his friend, he caused the following to be engraven on the stone:—

HIC JACET TORQUATUS TASSO.

The *Jerusalem Delivered* is the work by which Tasso is best known in this country, as we have it translated by Hoole. We cannot stay to enumerate the various other works, by which his fame spread over not only his own country, but the whole of Europe; nor have we had space above to do more than merely point attention to his misfortunes, and the probable origin of them. We may, however here appropriately introduce an anecdote respecting Tasso, to show that, however unequally he was at times treated by the great and powerful, the excellence of his works had ravished the hearts of the wildest and most ferocious of mankind.

The confines of the Ecclesiastical States were formerly so infested by banditti, that travellers went in parties, for each other's protection. Tasso, having occasion to proceed from Naples to Rome, joined himself to one of these companies, and when they came within sight of Mola, a little town outside the southern part of the Pope's territory, they heard that Sciarra, a famous captain of robbers, was near at hand, with a great body of men. Tasso was of opinion that they should continue their journey, and endeavour to defend themselves; but his opinion was over-ruled, and they retired into Mola for safety. Here they remained for some time, brocked up by Sciarra. At last the outlaw, hearing that Tasso was one of the party, sent a message, assuring him that he might pass in safety, and offering to conduct him wherever he pleased to go. Tasso returned him thanks but declined the offer, not daring perhaps to rely on the word of such a man as Sciarra. The robber then sent another message, informing Tasso, that from respect to him, he would withdraw his men, and leave the way open. Sciarra did as he said; and Tasso, continuing his journey, arrived at Rome without any accident.

That Tasso had a tendency to insanity, which was perhaps aggravated by evil and mistaken treatment, the following narration will suffice to show. He fancied that he was constantly attended by a genius, with whom he held familiar converse. His friend Manso having endeavoured to reason him out of this humour, Tasso said to him, "Since you will not believe me on my word, I must convince you, by your own eyes, that what I have said is not the effect of imagination." Accordingly the next day, while they were conversing together in the same room, Manso perceived that on a sudden Tasso fixed his eyes towards the window, and stood as if he were immovable. He called to him, and shook him several times; but, instead of giving a direct answer to his questions, Tasso said, "See, there is the spirit that has been pleased to come and visit me: look on him, and you will acknowledge the truth of what I say." Manso, somewhat surprised, directed his eyes towards the place pointed out, and saw nothing but the rays of the sun streaming through the glass; nor did he see anything at all in the room,

though he looked all round him with eager curiosity. But all the time Tasso continued speaking with great vehemence, putting questions and giving answers, as if he were actually carrying on a conversation with some person in the room. Manso, in his letter to a nobleman at Naples, speaks in the most rapturous terms of this mysterious discourse, though he confesses that he never heard any other voice than Tasso's. "I am brought to that pass," says Manso, "that I know not what to think or say; only that if it be a weakness in my friend to believe these visions, I fear it will prove contagious to myself, and that I shall at last become as credulous as Tasso."

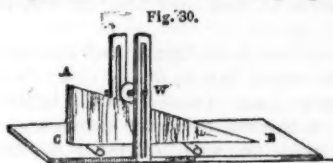
MECHANICAL POWERS.

No. VI. (Concluded.)

THE WEDGE AND THE SCREW.

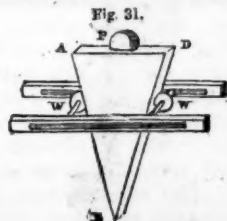
5. THE WEDGE.

WE have hitherto supposed the inclined plane to remain stationary, and the weight to be rolled up it; but it may also be used as a mechanical power by letting the inclined plane move horizontally, as in the apparatus represented in the following figure. Let w



be a weight moving freely up and down between two upright guides, which keep it always in the same vertical line. Let $A B C$ be a triangular piece of wood, whose face $A B$ is obviously an inclined plane. If this inclined plane be pushed forward by a certain power in the direction $C B$, the weight w will be raised. The power at C , and the resistance at w , may also be made to balance each other; but then there will be a gain of power, because it is applied indirectly; and there is a loss of velocity because the inclined plane evidently moves forward faster than the weight w moves upwards. The gain of power is in proportion as the length $C B$ exceeds the altitude $A C$; for, while the moveable inclined plane moves forward through its whole length $C B$, the weight only rises through its height $A C$. Hence, the gain is not so great as in the fixed inclined plane; for it is the line $C B$, and not $A B$, that determines the increase of power. This difference is most obvious when the planes are steep; for, with the fixed inclined plane, however steep it may be, there is always a gain of power, for $A B$ must always exceed $A C$; but with the moveable plane, if $C B$ do not exceed $A C$, or if the angle $A B C$ be not less than 45° , there is no gain of power; and if $A C$ exceed $C B$, or the angle $A B C$ be more than 45° , there is even a loss.

But this is not the form in which the moveable inclined plane is commonly employed. It is usually made of iron in the shape $A D B$, fig. 31. Such an instrument is called a *wedge*, and is used to separate two bodies, $w w$, which are pressed together by a certain force which constitutes the resistance, and is overcome by a power applied at P . Here the inclined plane is *double*; and the increase of power is in proportion as $P B$ exceeds the back of the wedge, or $A D$; and this agrees



perfectly with common experience, for every one knows that the sharper any cutting instrument is, the less exertion is required in using it. Now all cutting instruments act on the principle of the wedge, and sharpness consists simply in having the depth rs very great in comparison with the thickness at the back ad . The wedge is commonly used for cleaving



Fig. 32.

masses of wood or stone: in this case the power applied to the back of the wedge is not pressure, but impact, or a sudden blow from a hammer; and this produces a much greater force than the mere pressure of a certain weight. In fact, the real power of the wedge can hardly be calculated; and the theories respecting it are open to question, and very much disputed.

6. THE SCREW.

The great defect in the inclined plane, whether fixed or moveable, is its unwieldy length, where a very high power is used. To obviate this, it may be coiled up, so as to occupy a much smaller space, and it then becomes a *screw*; which may be compared to a winding staircase, which occupies much less room than a straight one of the same length and altitude; or to a winding path which begins at the foot of a steep hill, and winds round and round it till it reaches the summit. Now, of course, the longer such a path is, the more easy will it be; and to make it longer or more gentle, we must give it a greater number of turns; and, as the height remains the same, these turns will go on approaching nearer to each other.

The screw consists of a cylindrical body, having a projecting piece, called its *thread*, or *worm*, apparently wound round the cylinder in a peculiar line, called a *spiral*. To show how the spiral is produced by coiling up an inclined plane, cut out a piece of paper, in the shape of abc , fig. 28. Apply the side bc to a cylindrical body, such as a round ruler, or a cedar pencil, and roll the paper evenly and carefully round it, and you will see that the line ca , which before represented an inclined plane, is now become a spiral line, like the thread of a screw.

Together with the screw an instrument called a *nut* is used: it consists of a block of wood or iron, having a hole in it, equal in diameter to the screw. This hole is *tapped*, or has a spiral groove cut in it, so as exactly to fit the thread of the screw. When the screw is inserted into this hole, and turned, either the screw or the nut must move; they must change their positions with respect to each other. If the nut be fixed, the screw will enter it on one side, pass through, and come out at the other side; and if the screw be fixed, the nut will be gradually worked

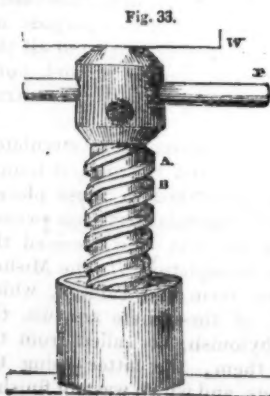


Fig. 33.

along it from one end to the other.

This figure represents the manner in which a screw is used to lift an enormous weight. Here the nut is fixed, as seen in the bottom of the figure: the weight w rests on the top of the screw, and the latter, by being turned round by the lever at p , is gradually raised up, lifting the weight with it. Now, first suppose the power p to be applied directly

to the circumference of the screw, so as to turn it; every revolution of the power will raise the screw and weight, through the space ba , which is the distance between two turns of the thread. The loss of velocity, or the gain of power, is in proportion, therefore as the circumference of the screw exceeds the distance between two turns of the thread. Thus, if the screw were two inches in diameter, it would be about six inches in circumference; and if the distance between two contiguous turns of the thread were half an inch, the power would be multiplied twelve times. But this does not give the whole power of the machine represented above. The power is not applied directly to the circumference of the screw, but to the extremity of a long pole p , inserted into the head of the screw, and acting like a lever or winch, or like the poles of the capstan, described in our third paper. One whole revolution of this pole is necessary to raise the weight through a space equal to ba , or half an inch, in this instance. The entire power, therefore, depends on the length of the pole p , and on the closeness, fineness, and strength of the thread. If, therefore, the length of the pole be six feet, it will describe a circle whose radius is six feet, or whose circumference is about 36 feet, and all this will only raise the weight half an inch. Thus the velocity is diminished no less than 864 times, and the power increased in proportion. By means of such an apparatus as this, large buildings that have somewhat given way, are raised to the perpendicular, by the force of one or two men working at a small screw, whose head is turned like a capstan; and the first impulse which the largest vessel receives before she is launched, is from a small screw like this.

But the most common use of the screw as a mechanical power, is in the common screw-press, in which an enormous pressure is produced by a very small force. The vice, used by carpenters, is only a small screw-press, placed horizontally instead of vertically.

The following figure is a representation of the screw-press, of great value in domestic arrangements, and in other concerns of life. A screw is cut upon the *outside* of a cylinder, KL , and a corresponding *internal* screw is cut in the nut at N . The cylinder KL is also hollowed out, and an *internal* screw is cut in it, corresponding with an *external* screw cut upon the cylinder M , which is fixed to the sliding part of the press AB .

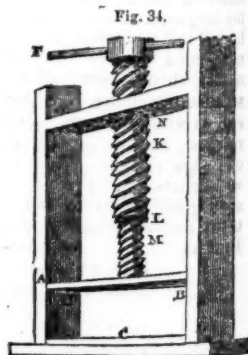


Fig. 34.

Now, if the screws K and M had the same distance between their respective threads, and the upper screw were turned round by a power p applied to the lever, the board AB would not move; for the upper screw would be depressed at N , just as much as the lower screw would be raised, within the upper one. The distance, therefore, between the threads of M is somewhat less than between those of K ; so that the board AB is lowered, in each revolution of p through a space equal to the difference of the distance between two threads in K and two threads in M .

In this machine there is an equilibrium, when the power at p is to the pressure on AB as the difference of the distances between the threads of the screws is to the circumference described by p . By increasing

the force at F, we carry down the board AB towards C. It might seem that, by lengthening the lever, and cutting the threads very fine and close, the screw would be unlimited in effect; but, in practice, the lever cannot conveniently go beyond a certain length; and, if the threads of the screw be made too fine, they become too weak to sustain the required pressure, and consequently break off.

We have thus carried the reader through a popular account of the fundamental principles of MECHANICS; which principles are the basis of all machinery. We trust that the younger student may, by means of these papers, be led to turn his attention and abilities to this universally useful department of science; and that the older workman, who may be constantly employed in practically illustrating the effects of the mechanic powers, may be disposed, upon convenient occasions, to give his mind to the principles from whence those effects result.

How much valuable and useful information of the actual existing state of arts and knowledge at any period might be transmitted to posterity in a distinct, tangible, and imperishable form, if, instead of the absurd and useless deposition of a few coins and medals under the foundations of buildings, specimens of ingenious implements, or condensed statements of scientific truths, or processes in arts and manufactures, were substituted. Will books infallibly preserve to a remote posterity all that we may desire should be hereafter known of ourselves and our discoveries, or all that posterity would wish to know? And may not a useless ceremony be thus transformed into an act of enrolment in a perpetual archive, of what we most prize, and acknowledge to be most valuable?—HERSCHEL.

A TALKER.

His measure of talk is till his wind is spent, and then he is not silenced, but becalmed. His ears have caught the itch of his tongue; and though he scratch them, like a beast with his hoof, he finds a pleasure in it. He shakes a man by the ear as a dog does a pig, and never loosens his hold till he has tired himself as well as his patient. He is a walking pillory, and punishes more ears than a dozen standing ones. He will hold any argument rather than his tongue, and maintain both sides at his own charge; for he will tell you what you will say, though perhaps he does not intend to give you leave. His tongue is always in motion, though very seldom to the purpose; like a barber's scissors, which are kept snipping as well when they do not cut, as when they do. He is so full of words that they run over, and are thrown away to no purpose; and so empty of things, or sense, that his dryness has made his leaks so wide, whatsoever is put in him runs out immediately. He is so long delivering himself, that those that hear him desire to be delivered too, or despatched out of their pain.—BUTLER.

MAN with raging drink inflamed,
Is far more savage and untamed;
Supplies his loss of wit and sense
With barbarousness and insolence;
Believes himself, the less he's able,
The more heroic and formidable;
Lays by his reason in his bowls,
As Turks are said to do their souls,
Until it has so often been
Shut out of its lodging, and let in,
At length it never can attain
To find the right way back again.—BUTLER.

MANY philosophers imagine that the elements themselves may be in time exhausted; that the sun, by shining long, will effuse all its light, and that, by the continuous waste of aqueous particles, the whole earth will at last become a sandy desert. I would not advise my readers to disturb themselves, by contriving how they shall live without light and water. For the days of universal thirst and perpetual darkness are at a great distance. The ocean and the sun will last our time, and we may leave posterity to shift for themselves.—JOHNSON.

THE JEWS.

I. THE TALMUD.

IN affording some information on the interesting subject of the present state and future prospects of the Jews, it will be first necessary to give some account of their book of traditions,—the Talmud; the study of which forms so essential a portion of the religious observances of the sect. We shall then make a comprehensive sketch of their condition in each quarter of the globe; and lastly, present some striking evidences of the hope by which the Hebrews seem at the present moment to be animated, of returning to the home of their fathers,—Jerusalem, and of again becoming a separate nation.

The Talmud is the book in which the traditionary laws of the Jews are recorded, as distinguished from the written law contained in the Pentateuch. The Rabbis trace for it a Divine origin, but admit that, unlike Moses, the writers by whom it was compiled were uninspired. The Jewish commentator, Maimonides, gives the following circumstantia account of its origin:

It must be known that the precepts delivered to Moses by God were accompanied by an interpretation; God himself first uttering the text, and then its explanation. When Moses returned to the tent, (compare Exodus xxxv. and xl.), the first person he met was Aaron, to whom he repeated the text and interpretation, as he had just received it. When Aaron went to stand on the right hand of Moses, Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, came in, to whom Moses repeated what he had done to Aaron. When they went to stand, one on the left of Moses, the other on the right of Aaron, the seventy elders entered, and were taught by Moses in like manner. The whole people next came in, seeking the Lord, and the same was repeated to them, until all had heard it. Moses then left them, and Aaron repeated to those who remained, what he had thus four times heard. Aaron then departed, and Eleazar and Ithamar repeated to the elders and people what they had, four times heard. On their departure, the elders repeated to the people what they had heard four times also; so that the people had heard it four times.

Thus the traditions were handed down to successive generations orally, in obedience to the strong injunction, which forbade that "things delivered by word of mouth should be committed to writing."

The misfortunes which followed, with disastrous rapidity, the rejection of the Saviour by the Jews, reached their climax by the virulent persecutions of the Emperor Hadrian, who, driving the Hebrews from Judæa, caused the beginning of that dispersion, so pointedly prophesied in Scripture, and now so visibly fulfilled; and the learned Rabbi Jehudah, (a name all but worshipped by the Rabbinical Jews,) seeing the utter hopelessness of the Hebrew cause, collected the traditions during the succeeding reigns of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus, and recorded them in a book called Mishna, or "Secondary Law." For this purpose he spent many years in collecting materials from all the rabbis of the nation, wherever dispersed; and published it A.D. 140, the eleventh year of the Emperor Commodus.

The Mishna having been extensively circulated among the Jews in Palestine and Babylon, it found, in the Hebrew schools established in those places, many commentators, whose emendations soon swelled into a bulk far exceeding the text, and received the title of Gamara, or "the Completion." The Mishna and the Gamara united form the Talmud, which means "the Doctrinal;" of these there are two, the Jerusalem and the Babylonish, so called from the schools that compiled them; the latter being the most famous and complete, and which was not finished

till three hundred and sixty years after the first promulgation of the Mishna.

Even the ritual law of Moses abounds with the most minute ceremonies to be observed in the commonest actions of life, but these are infinitely multiplied in the Talmud; and to observe them all would be next to impossible. Indeed, it requires the study of a whole life to become acquainted, merely, with the immensity of regulations set forth in the Talmud; and many lives are devoted, among the strict Talmudists, to that sole object. "When, therefore, a boy displays a peculiarly acute mind, and studious habits, he is placed before the twelve folio volumes of the Talmud, and its legion of commentaries and epitomes, which he is made to pore over with an intenseness which engrosses his faculties entirely, and often leaves him in mind, and occasionally in body, fit for nothing else; and so vigilant and jealous a discipline is exercised, so to fence him round as to secure his being exclusively Talmudical, and destitute of every other learning and knowledge whatever, that one individual has lately met with three young men, educated as rabbis, who were born and lived to manhood in the middle of Poland, and yet knew not one word of its language*." Even before the Talmud, with its interminable commentaries, was compiled, the ritual law of the Israelites was designated as "a heavy burden, and hard to be borne;" and so minute are the observances of strict Jews to this day, that it has been remarked, it takes as hard a course of theological learning to become a Jew butcher, (from the vast number of regulations as to choosing the beast, sharpening the knife, &c.,) as in most universities of Europe, would qualify the student for the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

But the study of the Talmud is by no means the dry and dull occupation it might seem. The commentaries, or *Gamāra*, are, after the Oriental fashion, enlivened by *stories*, some of them conveying an important moral, others apparently absurd, and a few not very delicate. This method of mixing up graver matters with fanciful narratives is peculiar to the East. Mr. Lane, in his entertaining work on the *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, states that during his residence in Cairo, he heard several songs, the alternate verses of which were the reverse of moral, while the other stanzas contained sentiments of the purest piety.

This peculiarity has frequently drawn down upon the Talmud the heaviest censure and ridicule from critics, who have kept the fanciful mode of conveying instruction adopted by Orientals out of sight; and who have forgotten that the example of our Saviour sanctified the principle of applying stories or parables to the elucidation of affairs of the most sacred importance.

Some of these Talmudic tales have been rendered into English; three of them will be found in Mr. Coleridge's work, entitled *The Friend*; and Mr. Hurwitz recently published a small volume of *Hebrew Tales* taken from the same source. We here present our readers with a specimen from the last named work:—

Compelled by violent persecution to quit his native land, Rabbi Akiba† wandered over barren wastes and dreary

* *Quarterly Review*, vol. 38, p. 122. Art.: "On the present state of the Jews."

† We may mention that Akiba is a great name in Jewish history. He was the most learned of the rabbis, and president of the schools in the time of Hadrian; though he proclaimed the impostor Barchocheba (a Jewish general who led the rebellion against the Roman power) as the true Messiah, and acted as his armour-bearer. At the defeat of his countryman Akiba was cruelly carded (scratched with an iron wool-comb) to death, but bore the horrible tortures with extraordinary fortitude, and showed himself so attentive to the traditional ceremonies afterwards recorded in the Talmud, as to repeat the pro-

deserts. His whole equipage consisted of a lamp, which he used to light at night, in order to study the Law; a cock, which served him instead of a watch, to announce to him the rising dawn; and an ass, on which he rode.

The sun was gradually sinking beneath the horizon, night was fast approaching, and the poor wanderer knew not where to shelter his head, or where to rest his weary limbs. Fatigued, and almost exhausted, he came at last near a village. He was glad to find it inhabited, thinking where human beings dwelt, there dwelt also humanity and compassion; but he was mistaken. He asked for a night's lodging,—it was refused. Not one of the inhospitable inhabitants would accommodate him. He was therefore obliged to seek shelter in a neighbouring wood. "It is hard, very hard," said he, "not to find a hospitable roof to protect me against the inclemency of the weather; but God is just, and whatever He does is for the best." He seated himself beneath a tree, lighted his lamp, and began to read the Law. He had scarcely read a chapter when a violent storm extinguished his light. "What?" exclaimed he, "must I not be permitted even to pursue my favourite study! But God is just, and whatever He does is for the best."

He stretched himself upon the bare earth, willing, if possible, to have a few hours' sleep. He had hardly closed his eyes, when a fierce wolf came and killed the cock. "What new misfortune is this?" ejaculated the astonished Akiba. "My vigilant companion is gone! who then will henceforth awaken me to study the Law? But God is just; He knows best what is good for us poor mortals." Scarcely had he finished the sentence, when a terrible lion came and devoured the ass. "What is to be done now?" exclaimed the lonely wanderer; "my lamp and my cock are gone, my poor ass, too, is gone, all is gone! But praised be the Lord, whatever He does is for the best." He passed a sleepless night, and early in the morning went to the village to see whether he could procure a horse, or any other beast of burden to enable him to pursue his journey. But what was his surprise not to find a single individual alive!

It appears that a band of robbers had entered the village during the night, killed its inhabitants, and plundered their houses. As soon as Akiba had sufficiently recovered from the amazement into which this wonderful occurrence had thrown him, he lifted up his voice, and exclaimed, "Thou great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now I know by experience that poor mortal men are short-sighted and blind; often considering as evils what is intended for their preservation; but Thou alone art kind, just, and merciful. Had not the hard-hearted people driven me by their inhospitality from the village, I should assuredly have shared their fate. Had not the wind extinguished my lamp, the robbers would have been drawn to the spot, and have murdered me. I perceive also that it was thy mercy which deprived me of my two companions, that they might not by their noise give notice to the banditti where I was. Praise be Thy name for ever and ever!"

The Talmud, an object of excessive veneration among the stricter classes of Jews, was the subject of as violent persecution, hatred, and contempt, by the early Christians. The several Popes, up to the time of Pius the Fifth, in 1559, caused the books to be hunted out and burned; but the latter pontiff it was who ordered their most extensive destruction. A general burning took place through the Italian cities, and no fewer than 12,000 copies of the Talmud, in all 144,000 volumes, were destroyed. A few, however, having been successfully secreted, others were again printed from them; and, in later times, Poland became the seat of rabbinical learning, from whence it was spread over Germany, and the north of Europe.

The rabbis of the present day still remain bigoted adorers of the many absurdities contained in their book of tradition; though the light of Christianity having broken in upon many of them, has happily reduced the number of Jews who place implicit reliance upon the ordinances of the Talmud.

per prayers in the regular manner while under the hands of the executioner. His biographers have noted the very letter at which he was stopped by death. On the same day Akiba expired, the Rabbi Jehudah, who collected the Mishna, was born.

ST. HELENA.

WHILE there are some countries or districts which attract our attention by the natural peculiarities,—whether beautiful or otherwise,—which they present, there are others which derive all that renders them remarkable from the historical events with which they are connected. It happens that the Island of St. Helena combines both these attractions within itself; for while the natural features of the island are such as deserve the attention of all lovers of nature, the island is at the same time made a link in a great chain of historical events, by having been the last earthly resting-place of Napoleon Buonaparte,—the closing scene of his ambition,—his talents,—and his crimes.

St. Helena is situated in the Atlantic Ocean, in 5° 43' West long., and 15° 55' S. lat.: it is about twelve hundred miles distant from the west coast of Africa, and eighteen hundred from the east coast of America. Its greatest length is not more than ten miles and a half, breadth six and three quarters, and circumference twenty-eight. The whole area of the island contains about 30,000 acres, of which 14,000 are bare rock, or otherwise unimprovable, 8000 are waste lands, fit for trees or pasture, and only 3000 are considered fit for the plough. The island may be deemed to consist of one huge rock rising out of the bosom of the ocean, for it is bounded on nearly all sides by cliffs from six to twelve hundred feet in height. There is a chain of mountains running across the island from east to west, which is terminated at its eastern extremity by the Peak of Diana, rising to a height of 2700 feet. There are only four coves or openings at the shore; but rocks and shoals so abound, that there is only one of them at which a safe landing can be made, and it is at that spot where the only town on the island,—JAMES TOWN,—is situated; this is on the north-west side of the island.

The landing-place at James Town is like a half-moon, scarcely 500 paces wide between the two points; and close by the sea-side are strong batteries extending from one end of the bay to the other. The town is entered by an arched gateway, within which is a handsome parade about one hundred feet square: the road from the landing-place to this gateway passes over a drawbridge between double rows of guns. In the parade are situated the Government-house and the main-guard-room: within the former is the residence of the governor and the principal officers. The principal street in the town contains about thirty houses, most of which are neat and well built. There is also a church. The lofty headlands which command James Town, viz.: *Rupert's Hill* on the east, and *Ladder Hill* on the west, as well as every accessible portion of the coast, are strongly fortified.

There are some symptoms that the island is of volcanic origin, both from the nature of its mineral productions, and from the circumstance that slight shocks of earthquakes were felt in 1756, in 1782, and again in 1817. During a search for limestone, some years ago, a mineral was found which appeared to resemble gold-ore, and a reward of 250*l.* was offered for the discovery of a gold mine; but it was found that the mineral was *not* gold ore, nor have any symptoms of gold been since seen.

The principal animals on the island are cattle and goats, which were brought from England: pheasants and partridges are also very plentiful. There are scorpions and centipedes found in the valleys, but their sting is not dangerous. Sea-fowl, whales, and turtles occasionally appear on the coast; and there are about eighty species of fish found on the coast. It is remarkable, that although bees have frequently been brought to the island, they have never

flourished: it is believed that the high winds blow them away.

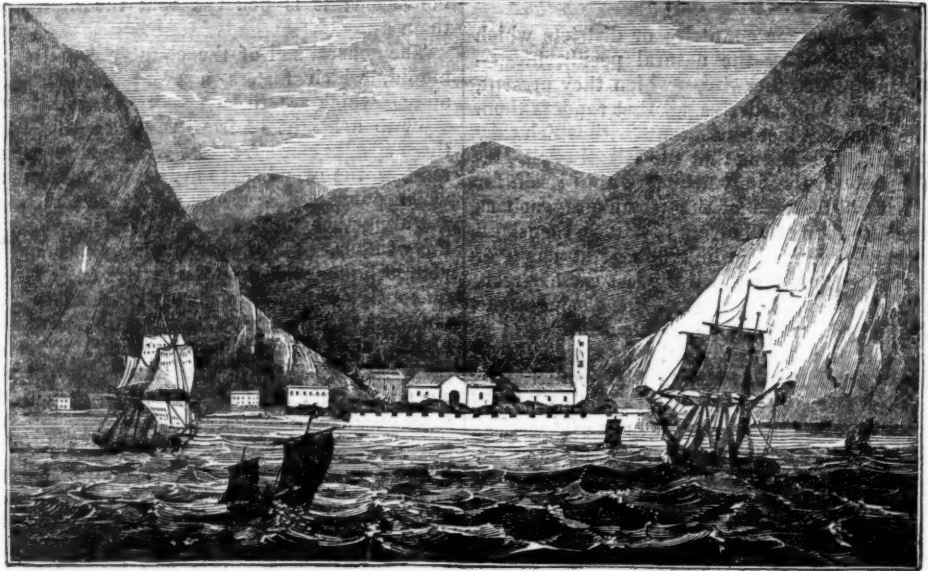
The general soil of the country consists of a rich mould, which fosters a great number of plants, among which are three species of gum-trees, which grow to a height of from three to thirty feet. All these species contain a highly aromatic gum, which renders the wood extremely pleasant as fuel, for which purpose it is chiefly cultivated; although it is not altogether unfit for building, if protected from the weather. From one of the species a sweet-flavoured liquor, called by the natives *toddy*, issues spontaneously; and a bottle, so placed as to catch the natural exudation, may be filled in the course of a night. Oaks, cypress, ferns, myrtles, and other plants, flourish in considerable abundance. Fruits are particularly abundant, as it is stated that on almost every farm are to be found vines, figs, limes, oranges, lemons, citrons, guavas, bananas, peaches, quinces, pomegranates, tamarinds, mulberries, melons, and pumpkins. Many of our English fruits have been introduced, and have not succeeded; but there is a remarkable exception to this with respect to the common *blackberry*. This was introduced in 1780, and it found the soil and climate so congenial, that it completely overspread large tracts of ground; and, as the only remedy against its encroachments, a public order was issued, and has uniformly been in force, for its entire extirpation.

The approach to the country, from James Town, has been thus described:—

The town contains many little gardens, groves, and shady walks, and extends the whole length of the valley, which gradually decreases in breadth, till at last there is room only for a single house. The view on each side from the streets, is awfully sublime, and discovers enormous masses of rock impending over the valley in a manner sufficiently alarming to the mind of a stranger. The roads which give access to the interior of the island, and which have been formed with incredible labour, by blowing up the rocks, are carried along the sides of Rupert's and Ladder Hill in a zig-zag direction, and the ascent to the summit is so easy, that oxen and carts pass along the apparently perpendicular precipice, without difficulty or danger. For the space of two miles, nothing but naked sterility and a rocky wilderness meets the eye of the traveller; but the sight is soon gratified by the sudden prospect of woody heights, verdant lawns, cultivated plantations, and handsome little country seats. The summit of High Knoll, particularly, presents a beautiful series of such prospects, surrounded by a lofty ridge of hills and precipices, which completely close in the view, and finely contrast with the softer and richer scenes which they disclose. On the south side of the knoll, about three miles from the town, is the governor's country residence, called Plantation House, a handsome and well-built edifice.

St. Helena is a very healthy spot: the temperature in the open country is never so hot as an English summer, nor so cold as an English winter: there have been years in which the highest summer temperature was 72°, and the general temperature of winter 55°. The atmosphere is generally so clear that a ship may be descried at a distance of sixty miles.

We must now say a few words respecting the history of the island. John de Nova, a Portuguese commander, discovered St. Helena on St. Helen's day, May 21st, 1501. There were no human beings on the island, and he merely announced the discovery, without founding a colony. About twelve years afterwards, some Portuguese noblemen, having offended against the Portuguese authorities in India, were cruelly mutilated by having their noses, ears, and right hands cut off, and in this pitiable state they were sent back to Europe. One of them, Fernandez Lopez, unable to bear the idea of appearing in his native country in such a state, was, at his own request, landed



VIEW OF ST. HELENA.

with a few slaves, on the lonely island of St. Helena. His countrymen endeavoured to alleviate his condition, by supplying him with goats, hogs, poultry, partridges, pheasants, guinea-fowls; as well as figs, oranges, lemons, peach trees, and vegetables, for planting. These succeeded so well, that in four years the little island began to have a cheerful appearance.

The government now began to perceive that the island might make a valuable halting-place for ships going from Portugal to India; by which they might have a supply of water and fresh provisions, &c: they therefore dismissed Lopez, and made the island a government station. They succeeded in concealing the situation of St. Helena from other countries for many years; but in 1588 Cavendish visited it in his return from his voyage round the world. It was soon after visited by the Spaniards and the Dutch, who wantonly destroyed the produce of the island. As the Portuguese gradually acquired settlements on the western coast of Africa, they left St. Helena in a desolate condition.

In 1651 the English East India Company formed a settlement on the island, which was confirmed to them ten years afterwards by a charter from Charles the Second. Many settlers were induced, by the offer of lands, to emigrate thither from England; and slaves were imported from Madagascar to work in the plantations. About fourteen years afterwards, the Dutch attacked and took the island; but were obliged to restore it shortly afterwards; and in the following year, 1666, many of the families which had been ruined by the fire of London, took refuge at St. Helena. Once again was it taken by the Dutch, and once again re-taken by the English.

The moral and internal economy of the island was in a very depressed state until about the year 1700, when several judicious means were resorted to for improving the morality of the inhabitants; and since that period the exertions of the successive governors have been directed to the improvement of the place. Repeated charters from the Crown vested the island to the East India Company, who govern it by a governor and council.

The importation of slaves into St. Helena ceased in 1792, and by the year 1810, it was thought necessary to import 50 Chinese labourers in order to proceed

with the agricultural operations. This number was gradually increased, and in 1823 the population was divided as follows:—white inhabitants 1201, civil and military establishment 911, slaves 1074, free blacks 729, Chinese 442, Lascars 24; making in all, 4381.

In 1815 St. Helena became the scene of much interest, from having been selected as the asylum or prison of Napoleon. Early in the year he had escaped from Elba, and it was therefore deemed necessary, after the battle of Waterloo, to select a strongly fortified place as his future residence. On the 7th of August, Napoleon was placed on board of the *Northumberland*, which then sailed for St. Helena, where it arrived on the 16th of October. The Allied Powers had given the custody of Bonaparte's person to England, and in July, 1816, Sir Hudson Lowe arrived at the island in the capacity of governor. Buonaparte was dissatisfied with the first residence allotted to him; and a house was afterwards built for him on the highest plain on the island, 1760 feet above the level of the sea: this was called *Longwood*. Here he lived until the 5th of May, 1821, when he died of an ulcer in the stomach, the effect of which was heightened by the irritation and dissatisfaction which constantly preyed upon his mind during the last three years he remained on the island. His remains were interred with military honours in Slane's valley, near a fountain overhung with weeping willows. The grave was afterwards enclosed by a railing, and a sentry has been since appointed to guard the spot.

EPITAPH ON A MISER.

HERE lies one who lived unloved and died unlamented; who denied plenty to himself, assistance to his friends, and relief to the poor; who starved his family, oppressed his neighbours, and plagued himself to gain what he could not enjoy; at last Death, more merciful to him than he was to himself, released him from care and his family from want; and here he lies with the muck-worm he imitated, and with the dirt he loved, in fear of a resurrection, lest his heirs should have spent the money he left behind; having laid up no treasure where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

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